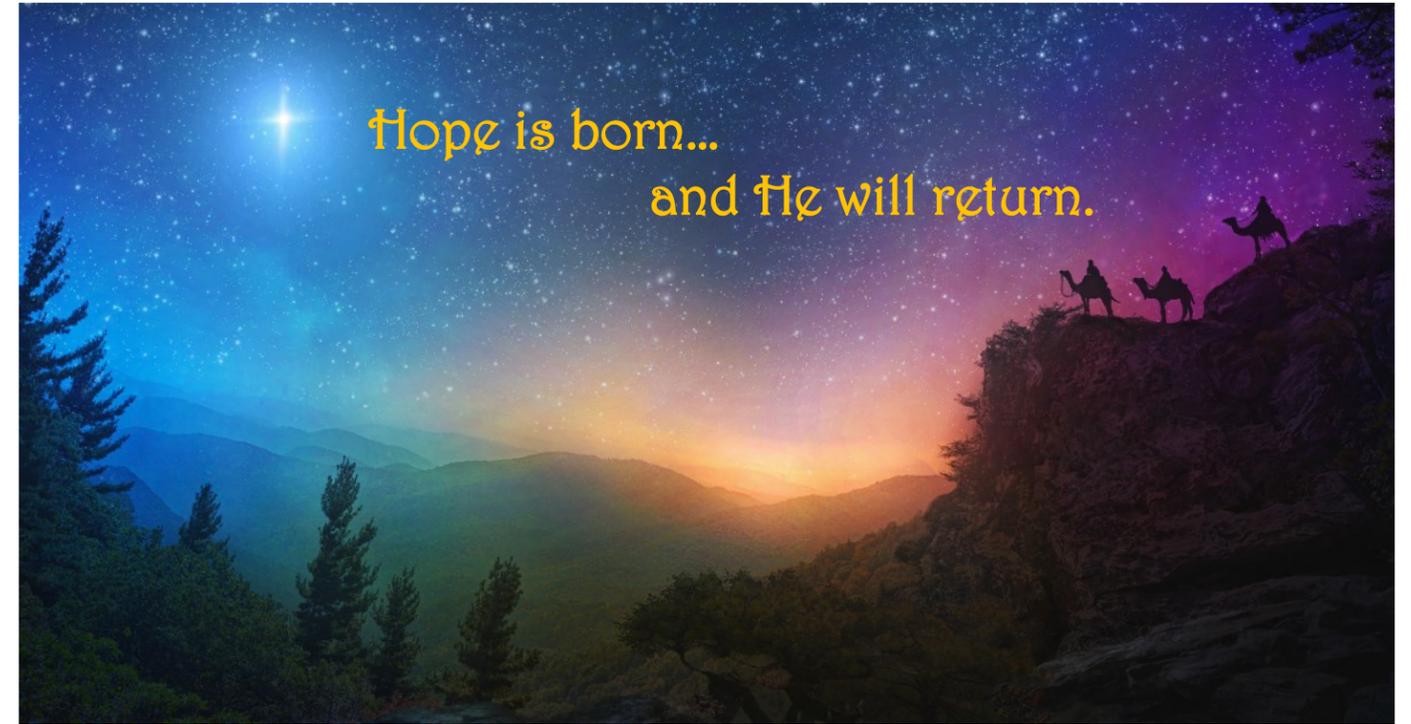




December Birthdays

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 7 Reed Sarles | 19 David Eggers | 22 Cathy Van Ostrand |
| 14 Lynne Jones | 20 April Cyr | 27 Paula Gunter |
| 17 Jenny Boyd | 21 Farrah Linkous | 30 Sarah McKay |

Happy December Birthday!



Hopz is born...
and He will return.

Dear Friends,

We live in a difficult time when everyone around us, including ourselves, are carrying burdens that we never thought possible. In all my years here at Erin, I've never known such a time when so many of our church folks have been impacted by illness, worries, uncertainty, and even death. In recent months, we've all lost dear friends and family members, which has saddened our hearts, injured our souls, and wounded our faith. We are each carrying a lot of pressure and pain, right now, and, because Covid never seems to go away, we are tired and weary of it all.

As we head into the season of Advent, I'm reminded that the Jewish people of God were living in similar times. They had been conquered by the Romans which meant that their basic freedoms were often curtailed at the whim of whatever governor was appointed over them. They were forced to pay taxes to a pagan emperor, who even caused ordinary people like Joseph and Mary to leave their homes in order to be officially counted at a designated tribal town, often hundreds of miles away. And, because Mary was heavily pregnant at the time, it must have been a very painful and uncomfortable journey for her and Joseph. You would think that because she was carrying Christ in her womb that God would protect them from any inconvenience or trouble,

but in order for God's Son to truly represent humanity, He had to know and experience suffering, even before He was born, to be just like us.

The season of Advent is like a religious waiting room when we expect Jesus to return to the Earth in order to heal us of all our broken and damaged ways. We look **back** to the past when He entered our human dimension as a child, while at the same time, we look **forward** to the moment when Jesus will re-enter the world to fully establish God's Kingdom where worry, pressure, pain, and death will disappear as He wipes away all tears of frustration, fear, grief and sadness from our faces. Until then, Christ simply asks us to trust Him completely; as for our burdens, He invites us to do this:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

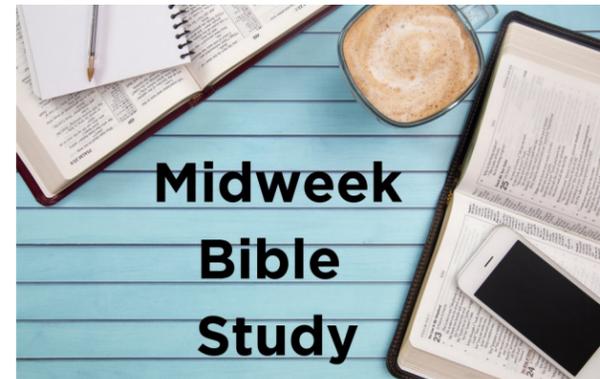
May God be with you and all your loved ones.

Pastor John

Visit us at: www.erinpres.org to catch up on news,
make an offering, and read John's devotions!

TO: «Agnes Kirby»
«8007 Ball Camp Pike»
«Knoxville» «TN» «37931»

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200 Lockett Rd. Knoxville, TN 37919
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CONNECTIONS CLASS

Pastor Stuart teaches a Bible class each Sunday called "Connections." It takes place, in-person, in the Heritage Room. Class members discuss a passage of scripture and share their ideas about what it means to them, as well as suggesting ways of applying the lesson. Pastor Stuart brings his knowledge of Biblical languages, culture, and history to augment the lesson. **The class begins at 9:30AM and ends at 10:15AM.**

During Advent, the class will be looking at the Old Testament Sunday lectionary scriptures that are traditionally read each week. Most of them, however, are actually excerpts from a full chapter, so the class will look at the whole context of the Bible verses that have been chosen. The title for this four-week series is called: **The Rest of The Story.**

Pastor Stuart normally emails the lesson to the class on Fridays to give the participants time to read and reflect on the proposed passage. He also posts them on our Church Facebook pages. If you would like to join the class or just receive these lessons, contact April by email admin@erinpresbyterian.org and she'll add your email address to the Connections group. Here are the proposed Advent lessons:

- Nov 28th – Psalm 25:1-22 – Alphabet Soup for The Soul
- Dec 5th – Malachi 3:1-18 – God Never Changes
- Dec 12th Isaiah 12:1-6 – God's Anger Ends
- Dec 19th – Micah 5:1-15 – This Shall Be Peace

Coming Soon to Connections in 2022:
The Book of Judges – all you need to know, but were afraid to ask!

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

On Wednesday or Thursday, Pastor Stuart sends out a midweek Bible study lesson via our events email list and also posts them to our Facebook pages. These studies can be easily downloaded. Currently, the studies are focused on consecutive passages from the Gospel of Mark. Pastor Stuart provides questions to be pondered, as well as suggesting how the lesson can be applied. The studies can be done individually, or with family and friends. Each study only takes about 20 minutes to complete.

If you would like to start receiving the study, contact April at admin@erinpresbyterian.org and she'll add your email address to the Events group.



Sunday Morning Volunteers

DECEMBER 5TH	DECEMBER 12TH	DECEMBER 19TH	DECEMBER 26TH
GREETER	GREETER	GREETER	GREETER
Nehemiah Fretter	Kelli Canan-Denny	Dave Leckie	Randy Sarles
GUIDE	GUIDE	GUIDE	GUIDE
Diana Brandon	Kelcey Levering	Yvette Freter	Evelyn Stuart
READER	READER	READER	READER
Kellan Sarles	Rob Levering	Rose Freter	David Eggers
USHERS	USHERS	USHERS	USHERS
Brooks Eggers	Kim Pennington	Linda Quinley	David Eggers
Jim Montgomery	Dusty Pennington	Jim Montgomery	Kellan Sarles
COUNTERS	COUNTERS	COUNTERS	COUNTERS
David Eggers	Craig Strand	Rickey McCallum	Neill Murphy
Ian Bone	John House	Ian Bone	Joe Jaynes
NURSERY	NURSERY	NURSERY	NURSERY
Lizzy Freter	Elaina Wood	Kenleigh Pennington	Ella Levering

Online Service Volunteers

	NOVEMBER 7TH	NOVEMBER 14TH	NOVEMBER 21ST	NOVEMBER 28TH
GUIDE	Stacie Armsworth and Girls	Andy/Kelsey Sarles	Rickey and Erin McCallum	Dave and Sara Leckie
READER	Cathy Van Ostrand Kelly Boyd	Yvette Freter and Kids	Randy and Kellan Sarles	Cathy Van Ostrand Kelly Boyd

Outreach



COMPASSION CLOSET CHRISTMAS TREE

We will again collect items for foster and adoptive families through the Compassion Closet Christmas tree. Compassion

Closet stocks clothing, beds, baby supplies, toys, and other items families need to care for the infants and children placed with them, often at the last minute. Most foster children bring nothing with them except the clothes they're wearing, so Compassion Closet shows Christ's love by easing some of the stress in the first day or two by providing these urgently needed items.

Starting on Sunday, December 5, take a tag from the tree in the narthex and place the item described on the tag under the tree by December 19. Many of the tags also give the dollar amount you can contribute so that Compassion Closet can purchase the item, if you prefer to contribute that way. A Sunday school class or other group may want to go in together toward the purchase of larger items:

Crib or toddler bed: \$100

Double stroller: \$150

Twin bed and mattress: \$250

Bunk beds and mattresses: \$500

Monetary gifts can be made by check to Erin Presbyterian Church with "Compassion Closet" in the subject line, or by PayPal or credit card at compassioncloset.com (scroll to the bottom and click on DONATE).

COATS FOR THE COLD

The Morgan-Scott Project serves low-income families and elderly and disabled residents in Morgan and Scott Counties in rural Appalachia.

Erin has supported this mission for more than 20 years by donating winter coats. This year coats



will also be distributed through the local schools, so children's coats are especially needed. Hang new or gently used (washed or dry cleaned) coats on the labeled coat rack in the narthex by Sunday, December 19, and the Outreach team will deliver them to make sure everyone can stay warm this winter.



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

Our congregation will be collecting the annual Christmas Joy special offering at the Christmas Eve service on Friday, December 24, as well as Sunday, December 26. The Christmas Joy Offering goes to support the leaders of our church: past, present, and future.

50% of the offering goes to assist current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.

50% of the gifts make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Schools included in this support are:

Menaul School in Albuquerque, NM; Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, TX; and Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL.

Ways to give:

Through the congregation (envelopes in pew or online through the Erin church website)
 Donate online: PCUSA.org/Christmasjoy
 Or text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999

Kid's Ministry & Calendar



Pop-Up Pioneer Club
Wed. December 15th
6:15 - 7:15 pm
Family Life Center

Join us for a Charlie Brown Christmas Party at our monthly "Pop-Up Pioneer Club." All kids, grades K - 5th grade are welcome! Invite a friend or two to come along!!
 Come celebrate the season and enjoy crafts, games, music, and dancing!!

Sunday School in Advent

The season of Advent begins November 28th. Children's Sunday School will continue to meet in person, in the Family Life Center, every Sunday from 9:30 - 10:30 am. Join us as we retell the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, and Jesus' birth.



December Calendar

SUNDAYS

9:30am Sunday School Classes
 11am Worship Service
 12:30pm Youth Groups

MONDAYS

7pm BridgeBuilders
 Ends on Dec. 13th

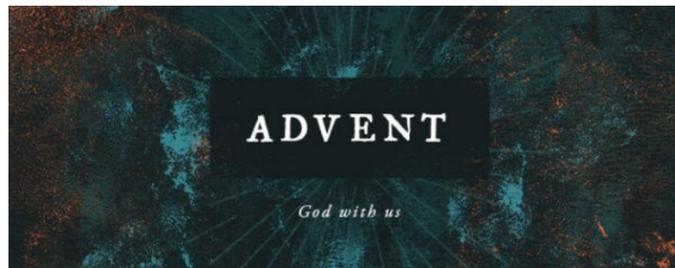
WEDNESDAYS

6:20pm Sonshine
 6:30pm Handbells
 6:30pm Journey 7
 7:30pm Choir

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS/MEETINGS

2nd 7pm Worship Team
 7th 7pm Discipleship Team
 10th 12pm Staff Meeting
 12th 12pm Outreach
 13th 6pm Property
 16th 7pm Session Meeting
22nd Caroling at the Pub
24th 6:30pm Christmas Eve Service
 24th Office Closed for Christmas
 27th Office Closed for Christmas





For those who cannot attend in person, all of our Advent/Christmas services will continue to be brought to you via Vimeo.

We hope you will be fully present in this beautiful season of Advent by drawing close to God through worship!

Your Worship Team

LOOKING FORWARD TO LOOKING FORWARD

No, the title isn't a typo. Advent is a season of looking forward to the birth of Jesus, of waiting for an angel and watching for a star, but mostly yearning for the arrival of a savior. And right now, we eagerly look ahead to this season of looking forward, of expectation and preparation, of humility and royalty all bundled together in swaddling clothes.

What can we expect in Advent worship?

Beginning on the first Sunday of Advent, November 28, we will enter a sanctuary clad in purple paraments, greenery, and chrismos. The first of five special candles will be lit. In the weeks that follow, we will offer praise to God with wonderful organ and piano offerings, the chiming of handbells, choir anthems and solos, and beloved hymns.

Prior to our 6:30 Christmas Eve service, Erin would like to begin what may become a hallowed tradition, the singing of carols in the narthex.

The choir invites *all who want to sing (adults, kids, everyone!)* to arrive by 6:00, pick up a songbook, and make a joyful noise with the cherished carols of the season! You will be amazed at the acoustics in the narthex!

Our 6:30 Christmas Eve service will begin with a handbell prelude followed by special readings, piano and organ music, and a candlelit singing of Silent Night.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

The poinsettias will be \$15 each this year.

During the worship service, simply fill out the insert provided in the bulletin to give a poinsettia in Honor or in Memory of someone dear to you. Take your poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve service.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING

Thank you to everyone who stayed after church and helped us get the sanctuary and narthex decorated for Christmas!



Erin Presbyterian was well represented at the Annual Assembly of Justice Knox on November 15th at First Baptist Church, Knoxville. Twenty three network members were present to cast their vote for the issue that would be researched into action for the coming year. Our small church had one of the largest delegations! On behalf of the Erin Presbyterian, Pastor John Stuart and Kellan Sarles participated in a brief covenanting ceremony led by the Reverend Jacques Bragg.



The work of the evening was to choose one new problem for the organization to address in the coming year. With four compelling issues on the agenda: polluted waterways, homelessness, hunger, and Violence, choosing one to move forward was difficult. These were the problems people testified to in 80+ house meetings earlier this fall. Ultimately, addressing violence across our community won the most votes and will become the newest initiative of Justice Knox. In coming months, network members will have opportunity to engage in study, research, coalition building, proposal development, stake-holder negotiation, and prayer. They also pledge to bring 3 people each to the Nehemiah Action Assembly on May 2 to show solid support for just actions.

Earlier in the assembly, Justice Knox representatives shared updates/successes on current initiatives including mental health, affordable housing, education, and public transportation. Before a crowd of 340 people, the organization recognized Public Defender Eric Lutton and County Commissioner Larsen Jay for their work to bring mental health in-patient facilities to Knox County.

To learn more about Justice Knox or to become a network member, contact House Leaders Kellan and Randy Sarles, or Brooks and David Eggers.

KNOXVILLE PAYS IT FORWARD

Thank you so much for your recent donation of a truckload of personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies to Knoxville Pays It Forward. Your donation helped us completely restock our empty shelves after we donated the entire contents of our warehouse to the flood victims in Waverly, Tennessee.



Your kindness will help others in our community and we are on standby and ready to help them in an emergency. Our goal is to always help hard-working individuals

who find themselves in a bind, yet have very few resources. Without teamwork and continued support in our community this would not be possible.

Giving is not about a donation, it is about making a difference. And we are honored to have partnered with you to make that difference right here in our own community.

Respectfully,
Kim Cantrell, Director
Knoxville Pays It Forward, Inc.

